

S. O. 21

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ATMOSPHERE

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, a major international conference is being held in Toronto next week to discuss the health of the global atmosphere. This conference is a result of initiatives taken by the Government in response to the call for action by the World Commission on Environment and Development.

Over recent years, leading world scientists have reached a consensus that increasing human activities will cause inevitable alterations to the world climate. There is growing recognition that the atmosphere is our most pervasive global commons. Climate change and other major air pollution issues require international action if we are to make progress on the road to sustainable socio-economic development.

This world conference is the first of its kind, and is expected to be a key step in developing international agreements and strategies which will assist humanity in adapting to these expected environmental changes.

This is yet another example of this Government's world leadership in issues crucial to our common future.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

CLEAN-UP OF ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Government will spend \$110 million over the next five years to protect, conserve and clean up the St. Lawrence River, which was polluted by the previous Government and which will be cleaned up by the Conservative Government. Mr. Speaker, this is the most important federal environmental initiative in Quebec.

The Governments of Canada and Quebec have agreed to implement the appropriate coordination mechanisms to ensure that the action taken by each side to clean up and develop the St. Lawrence River is complementary.

To restore the quality of the River to what it was in past years, the federal Government intends to implement a dynamic four-part action plan and to create a marine park for the protection of endangered species and sensitive habitats. Six million dollars have been set aside to protect the beluga whales at the mouth of the Saguenay. I am proud that my Government recognizes the priceless value of the St. Lawrence River, which has always been a source of great pride for Canadians and is a living heritage.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, where the NDP was at the time when it inspired and passively endorsed the lack of concrete policies from the federal Liberal Government.

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[English]

HOUSING

SITUATION IN METRO TORONTO

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the crisis of affordable housing in Metro Toronto is approaching the point at which people cannot even begin to dream about owning a home. While the average cost of a home surpasses the \$225,000 threshold, the federal Government continues to remain irresponsibly silent.

Surely the Government has heard the calls from ordinary Canadians who cry out for immediate and sensible reforms, and the many recommendations offered by Members on all sides of this House.

Surely the Government has also considered the Downsview Air Force Base, or surplus federally owned lands, for potential housing sites. Yet the federal Government has been incredibly negligent in its absence of leadership. Perhaps it believes in the Thatcher approach of allowing pure market forces to dictate the price.

● (1410)

The ability and opportunity to own and live in an affordable home are more than a financial transaction. This is also a question of human need and dignity.

I call upon the federal Government to stop this moral bankruptcy and to move to stem the tide before Toronto becomes a tale of two cities: one for those who can live there, and one for those who can only work there.

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[Translation]

ST. JEAN BAPTISTE FÊTE

TRIBUTE TO QUÉBECERS

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): On behalf of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate all Quebec men and women who will honour their patron saint tomorrow on St. John the Baptist Day. Tomorrow, my Leader is planning to go to the Montreal area to join them in their festivities.

I find it particularly revealing that in 1988, it was only yesterday, with a large majority and hardly any resistance, that the House of Commons finally agreed to the Meech Lake